REMARKS

A total of 28 claims remain in the present application. The foregoing amendments are presented in response to the Office Action mailed June 22, 2006, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

By way of the foregoing amendments, claims 1, 12 and 25 have been amended to more clearly define features of the present invention. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to define that: the data network includes at least two ABRs, each of which hosts at least one respective area of the data network; the forwarding policy of an ABR is used to control propagation of a received LSA message into the respective area hosted by the ABR; and the respective forwarding policy of a first ABR differs from that of a second ABR, such that the received LSA message is flooded into the area hosted by the first ABR, and not flooded into the respective area hosted by the second ABR. Corresponding revisions have been made in claims 12 and 25. These features are clearly illustrated in the drawings and described in detail throughout the original specification. As such, no new subject matter has been introduced by way of the foregoing amendment.

Referring now to the text of the Office Action:

- claims 1-6, 10, 12-15, 17-22, 25 and 28-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,473,421(Tappan);

- claims 7-8, 23-24 and 30-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in light of Tappan in view of Applicant's admitted prior art; and

- claims 11, 18 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in light of Tappan in view of Applicant's admitted prior art, and further in view of United States Patent No. 5,265,092 (Soloway)

It is believed that the Examiner's claim rejections are fully traversed by way of the above-noted amendments, and further in view of the following comments.

The person of ordinary skill in the art will immediately recognise that the teaching of Tappan does not meet the limitations defined in the claims of the present application. In particular:

- Tappan does not teach or suggest <u>that propagation of a received LSA, into an area hosted by the router, is controlled based on a respective forwarding policy having a match criteria corresponding to the asserted route tag,</u> as required by the claims.

- Tappan does not teach or suggest that the respective forwarding policy of a first router differs from that of a second router, such that a received LSA message is flooded into an area hosted by the first router, and <u>not</u> flooded into a respective area hosted by the second router.

With respect to the first of these differences, Tappan requires that propagation of a received LSAs is controlled by the procedure of FIG. 9, which, as described at length in Tappan, and discussed in Applicant's previous responses, relies on the content of the Advertising Router and Link-state ID fields, not the Route Tag field. According to Tappan, the content of the Route Tag Filed is only used to trigger the execution of the forwarding procedure of FIG. 9 (see col 8, lines 39-46), it does not control the result. As such, to the extent that the procedure of Tappan can be characterised as a forwarding policy, Tappan teaches directly away from the present invention by requiring match criteria corresponding to the Advertising Router and Link-state ID fields.

With respect to the second of the above-noted differences, Tappan explicitly teaches that routers implementing the methods of Tappan's invention execute the forwarding procedure of FIG. 9 to determine whether to send a received LSA to a given neighbour router (see col 8, lines 39-46). Since the same forwarding procedure (FIG. 9) is implemented in each router, and the conditions under which that procedure are triggered are the same in each router, it follows that -other things being equal- a given LSA will yield the same decision results in every router that receives that LSA. For example, consider a network in which Tappan's Area-0 and Area-1 are both connected to Area-2 via node TR2 (see FIG. 8, which is rearranged for this example).

Consider further that Tappan's Autonomous system Border Router E-ASBR generates an AS-External LSA in which the External Route Tag field's first bit is 0 and the Format part identifies it as containing an MPLS label. In this case, both ABR1 and ABR2 will receive the AS-External LSA via TR2, and will execute the method of FIG. 9 to control forwarding of the AS-External LSA (col 8, lines 39-46) into their respective areas. Since the AS-External LSA was not originated by either ABR1 or ABR2 (FIG. 9, block 50) and did not originate in the "next" area (FIG. 9, block 52), both ABR1 and ABR2 will originate a filtered version of the AS-External LSA into its respective area (FIG. 9, block 56).

In direct contrast, the present invention requires that the forwarding policy of a first router differs from that of a second router, such that the two routers will treat a received LSA differently. More specifically, the received LSA will be flooded into the area hosted by the first router, and not flooded into the area hosted by the second router. The only scenario in which Tappan's ABR1 and ABR2 could make similarly opposite forwarding decisions (that is, ABR1 decides to forward the LSA, and ABR2 decides to not forward the LSA, for example) is one in which the LSA is originated by one the ABRs (FIG. 9, via blocks 50, 58). However, this scenario does not read onto the presently claimed invention, because the LSA under consideration is not a "received LSA" for one of the involved ABRs.

In light of the foregoing, it is believed that the presently claimed invention is clearly patentable over the teaching of United States Patent No. 6,473,421(Tappan). None of the other known prior art references provide the missing teaching. Thus, it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early action in that respect is courteously solicited.

If any extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain entry of this response, such extension is hereby respectfully requested. If there are any fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 which are not enclosed herewith, including any fees required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-5113.

Respectfully submitted,
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